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ABSTRACT

This document provides comparative information on state legislation concerning (1) the reporting of suspected cases of child abuse and neglect throughout the United States, and (2) the establishment and use of central registries containing reported data. The first section lists for each state: who must and who may make reports of suspected child abuse, what form the report should take, when and to whom it should be made, penalties for failure to report and legal immunities for those who file reports. The second section, which deals with state central registries, lists for each state: whether a central registry is present in the state statute, what parties have access to reports stored in the registry, and penalties for improper use or release of reports. (SB)

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Child Abuse and Neglect in the States:

A Digest of Critical Elements of Reporting and Central Registries

Child Abuse and Neglect Project
Education Commission of the States

Report No. 83
March 1976

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CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT IN THE STATES:

A DIGEST OF CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF REPORTING AND CENTRAL REGISTRIES

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to provide some comparative background information about who *must* and who *may* report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect throughout the United States. This has been an issue of concern for policy makers and the general public for several years, since the passage of state laws mandating the reporting of child abuse and neglect.

A second concern has been *to whom* and precisely *how* reports are to be made by the potential reporter. Likewise, another legal and humanitarian concern has the penalties and immunities granted by law to a reporter of suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. It is hoped that the following digest will provide the reader with an overview of current legislative trends regarding the critical elements of reporting suspected child abuse and neglect.

STATES	WHO MUST/MAY MAKE REPORTS: PERSONS MANDATED TO REPORT (COMPULSORY) WHEN REASONABLE CAUSE TO BELIEVE A CHILD IS OR HAS BEEN SUBJECTED TO ABUSE OR NEGLECT	PERMISSIVE	FORM OF REPORT & WHEN MADE	TO WHOM REPORT IS MADE	PENALTIES FOR	IMMUNITIES FOR
Alabama	Hospital; clinic; sanitarium; doctor; physician; surgeon; medical examiner; coroner; dentist; osteopath; optometrist; chiropractor; podiatrist; nurse; school teacher; official; peace officer; law enforcement officer; pharmacist; social worker; day care worker or employee; mental health professional; or any other person called upon to render aid or medical attention to any child known or suspected to abused or neglected	Any person who has reasonable cause to believe a child is abused or neglected	Oral — immediate followed by a written report	"A duly constituted authority" defined to include: chief of police; sheriff, if the report is made in an unincorporated territory of the state; department of pensions and security or agency designated by it	Knowing failure to report punishable as a misdemeanor by a sentence of up to six months or a fine of up to $500	Anyone making a report shall be immune from any liability, either civil or criminal
Alaska	Practitioners of the healing arts; school teachers; social workers; peace and corrections officers; administrative officers of institutions	Same people in their nonprofessional capacities, anyone suspecting abuse or harm	Not given	Nearest office of the department of health and social services or police officer if immediate action necessary	None	Criminal and civil immunity for persons making reports in good faith
Arizona	Physician, hospital intern or resident physician	None	Immediately — oral followed by a written report	Municipal or county peace officer	For "violation of the provisions or this section" (presumably including failure to report), misdemeanor, with penalties up to $100 or 10 days or both	Civil and criminal immunity for those reporting under the statute, or those involved in a judicial proceeding resulting therefrom
Arkansas	Physician; surgeon, coroner; dentist; osteopath; resident intern; registered nurse; hospital personnel (actually engaged in the care of patients); teacher; school official; social service worker; day care center worker; or any other child or foster care worker; mental health professional; peace or law enforcement officer with reasonable cause to suspect abuse or conditions that would so result	Any other person with reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected	Telephone immediately; written report within 48 hours if requested	Department of social and rehabilitative services to appropriate medical examiner or coroner if the child has died	Criminal: up to $100 and up to five days in jail for willful failure to report Civil: for willful failure, liability; for all damages caused thereby	Civil and criminal immunity for reporting in good faith

California	Physician; surgeon; dentist; resident intern; chiropractor; religious practitioner; registered nurse; school superintendent; supervisor of child welfare and attendance; certified pupil personnel employee; school principal; teacher; licensed day care worker or social worker; podiatrist; administrator of a private or public summer day camp; teacher in a private or public school	None	Telephone and written within 36 hours	Local police authority and the juvenile probation department, or the county welfare or health department	Misdemeanor: $500 and/or six months	Civil and criminal immunity
Colorado	Physician or surgeon, including a physician in training; child health associate; medical examiner or coroner; dentist; osteopath; optometrist; chiropractor; chiropodist or podiatrist; registered nurse or licensed practical nurse; hospital personnel in admission, care or treatment of patients; Christian Science practitioner, school official or employee; social worker; worker in a family care home or child care center; mental health professional	Any other person	Immediate oral; followed by a written report if requested	County or district department of social services or local law enforcement agency	Criminal: class two petty offense; fine up to $200 Civil: liable for damages caused by failure to report	Making of report in good faith is presumed and results in full civil and criminal immunity
Connecticut	Physician; surgeon; resident physician or intern; any hospital in the state; not registered, registered or licensed practical nurse; medical examiner; dentist; psychologist; school teacher; principal or guidance counselor; social worker; police officer; clergyman; coroner; osteopath; optometrist; chiropractor; podiatrist; day care center worker; mental health professional	None	Immediate oral; written within 78 hours	State welfare commissioner or his representative, the local police department, the state police	Fine of not more than $500	Full civil and criminal immunity for reports made in good faith
	Any other person not named above		Immediate written or oral	If person observing child is a member of the staff of any hospital, school, social welfare agency, or any other institution, he shall report to his superior who shall make the required report		
Delaware	Physician, person in the healing arts, including any person licensed to offer services in medicine, osteopath; dentist; intern; resident, nurse, school employee, social worker, psychologist, medical examiner or any other person	None	Immediate oral; written if requested	Division of social services of the department of health and social services and, if deemed necessary, to the local law enforcement agency	Knowing and willful violation of the statute: up to $100 and/or imprisonment for up to 15 days	Full civil and criminal immunity for reports made in good faith

STATES	WHO MUST/MAY MAKE REPORTS: PERSONS MANDATED TO REPORT (COMPULSORY) WHEN REASONABLE CAUSE TO BELIEVE A CHILD IS OR HAS BEEN SUBJECTED TO ABUSE OR NEGLECT	WHO MUST/MAY MAKE REPORTS: PERMISSIVE	FORM OF REPORT & WHEN MADE	TO WHOM REPORT IS MADE	PENALTIES FOR	IMMUNITIES FOR
District of Columbia	Physicians; persons licensed under District of Columbia law to practice the healing arts (excludes dentists, podiatrists, optometrists, pharmacists and nurses)	None	Oral immediately, followed as soon as possible with witten	District of Columbia Metropolitan police department; if the person making the report is on the staff of a hospital, he makes the report to director of the hospital who makes it to the police department	None	Full civil and criminal immunity
Florida	Any person, including but not limited to any physician, nurse, teacher, social worker or employee in a public or private facility serving children	None	Immediate oral; followed by written as soon as possible	Department of health and rehabilitative services; if person making report is on the staff of a hospital, he shall report to the director of the hospital, who in turn shall report to the department	Knowing or willful violation constitutes a second-degree misdemeanor	Any person making a report under this section is presumed to be acting in good faith and as such, has full civil and criminal immunity
Georgia	Physician; licensed osteopathic physician; intern; resident; dentist; podiatrist; public health nurse; social worker; teacher; school administrator; child care or law enforcement personnel (provided that if person is on the staff of a facility, he shall report to the person in charge who shall make the required report)	None	Immediate oral; written to follow if requested	A child welfare agency providing protective services or, in its absence, to an appropriate police authority	None	Full civil and criminal immunity for report made in good faith
Hawaii	Any doctor (person licensed to render services in medicine or the healing arts including osteopathy, dentistry); or any registered nurse; school teacher; social worker; coroner in his official capacity (provided that if person is on the staff of a hospital or similar facility, the person shall report to the person in charge who shall make the required report)	Any other person who has reason to believe that a minor is abused or neglected	Prompt oral report followed as soon as possible by written report	Department of social services and housing	None	Full civil and criminal immunity for report made in good faith

Idaho	Physician; resident; intern; nurse; coroner; school teacher; day care personnel; social worker; or other person having reasonable cause to believe that child is abused or in danger of being so (provided, that if the person making the report is on a staff, he shall inform the person in charge who shall make the required report)	None	No procedure given	Proper law enforcement agency	None	Full immunity (criminal and civil) for good faith report; any person reporting in bad faith or with malice is not protected.
Illinois	Physician; hospital; dentist; surgeon; osteopath; chiropractor; podiatrist; Christian Science practitioner; coroner; school teacher or administrator; registered or licensed nurse; truant officer; social worker; social services administrator; director or staff assistant of a nursery school or a child day care center; law enforcement officer or field personnel of the Illinois Department of Public Aid	Any other person with reasonable cause to believe the child has been abused or neglected	Immediate oral; writing postpaid, U.S. mail, within 24 hours	Department of children and family services, local law enforcement agency	None	Full civil and criminal immunity for good faith report; good faith presumed
Indiana	It shall be the duty of any person who has reason to believe that a child has had physical injury inflicted upon him other than by accidental means by a parent or other person responsible for his care	None	Immediate report upon actual discovery of injury; no time provision for reporting mere suspicion	County Department of Public Welfare or the proper law enforcement agency	Consciously failing to make the required report is a misdemeanor and upon conviction punishable by a fine of not more than $100 and/or imprisonment for a period not to exceed 30 days	Any person except the person accused of infliction of physical injury on a child, who makes a report subject to this statute or who testifies at a judicial proceeding on the manner, has full civil and criminal immunity in the absence of a showing of bad faith or malice
Iowa	Any health practitioner (if on a hospital or facility staff, the practitioner's superior in charge of the facility); social worker under the jurisdiction of the department of social services, public or private health care facility; psychologist; school employee; employee in a licensed day care facility; members of the staff of a mental health center; peace officer (if any are on a staff, the director of the facility shall report)	Any other person who believes that a child has had physical injury inflicted upon him as a result of abuse	Immediate oral; written within 48 hours Permissive reporter may make oral, written or both	Department of social services or local police agency if need is immediate	Criminal: knowingly and willfully failing to report, not more than $100 or not more than 10 days in the county jail. Civil: knowing failure entails civil liability for damages caused by that failure	Full civil and criminal immunity for good faith report

STATES	WHO MUST/MAY MAKE REPORTS: PERSONS MANDATED TO REPORT (COMPULSORY) WHEN REASONABLE CAUSE TO BELIEVE A CHILD IS OR HAS BEEN SUBJECTED TO ABUSE OR NEGLECT	PERMISSIVE	FORM OF REPORT & WHEN MADE	TO WHOM REPORT IS MADE	PENALTIES FOR	IMMUNITIES FOR
Kansas	Persons licensed to practice the healing arts; dentists; persons in postgraduate training; programs in the healing arts; certified psychologists; licensed social workers examining, attending or treating a child under age 18; every licensed professional or practical nurse examining or caring for such child in the absence of the doctor; every school teacher, administrator or employee; any law enforcement officer (director of hospital or facility shall report rather than staff)	All other persons who have reason to believe that a child has been injured through abuse	Prompt oral; written if requested	Juvenile court of the county or the department of social rehabilitation services	Knowing and willful violation is a class B misdemeanor	Full civil and criminal immunity for reporting without malice
Kentucky	Physician; osteopath; nurse; teacher; school administrator; social worker; coroner; medical examiner; or other person having reasonable cause to suspect (administrator or director of hospital or other facility shall report rather than staff) Death of the child does not relieve responsibility for reporting the circumstances surrounding the death	None	Immediate oral followed as soon as possible with written	Representative of the department of human resources	None	Full civil and criminal immunity for report upon probable cause
Louisiana	Any person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health has been or may be further affected by abuse or neglect, such as licensed physicians; interns or residents; nurses; hospital staff members, teachers; social workers; and other persons or agencies having responsibility for care	Any other person having cause to believe that the child's welfare has been or may be further affected by abuse or neglect	Immediate oral; written within five days	Parish child welfare unit, parish agency responsible for the protection of juveniles or any local or state law enforcement agency	Implied that a knowing and willful failure to report is misdemeanor, up to $500 and/or six months	Civil and criminal immunity for good faith report
Maine	Physician; resident; intern; medical examiner; dentist; osteopath; chiropractor; podiatrist; registered or licensed practical nurse; Christian Science practitioner; teacher; school official; social worker; psychologist; child care personnel; mental health professional or law enforcement official (director reports instead of staff at a facility)	Any person may report if reasonable belief or cause to suspect	Immediate oral; written within 48 hours if requested	Department of health and welfare, also to appropriate medical examiner in case of death	Knowing and willful failure to report, if that child has been subject to abuse or neglect which results in a conviction of a person, results in misdemeaner penalty for such failure, fine of not more than $500	Good faith in reporting is presumed; civil and criminal immunity for such reporting

Maryland	Every health practitioner (broadly defined), educator (teacher or administrator), social worker or law enforcement official who contacts, examines, attends or treats a child and has reason to believe that the child is abused A person other than those in the above category who has similar reason to suspect abuse shall also report		Oral, followed by written within 48 hours Written, oral or both	Local department of social services or the appropriate law enforcement agency	None	Full civil and criminal immunity for good faith report
Massachusetts	Physician; medical intern; medical examiner; dentist; nurse; public or private school teacher; educational administrator; guidance or family counselor; probation officer; social worker or policeman in his professional capacity (directors report rather than staff)	Any other person with reason to believe that child is suffering from or has died because of abuse or neglect	Immediate oral; written within 48 hours	Department of public welfare if the child has died; report also to the district attorney for the county and the appropriate medical examiners	None	Absolute immunity for those required to report; immunity (civil and criminal) for others if report in good faith
Michigan	Physician; coroner; dentist; medical examiner; nurse; audiologist; certified social worker; social work technician; school administrator, counselor or teacher; law enforcement officer; or duly regulated child care provider (either staff or director of a hospital or other facility may make report)	Any person, including a child, who has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse of neglect	Immediate oral; written within 72 hours	State department of social services; permissive reporters may report to the department or law enforcement agency; staff must inform directors in hospital or other facility	Civil liability for damages caused by failure to report	Identity of reporter is kept confidential, immunity (civil and criminal) for good faith reporting; extends only to acts taken with respect to this reporting act
Minnesota	Professional or assistant in the practice of the healing arts, social services, hospital administration; psychologist; psychiatrist; child care worker; educator; or law enforcement official (only one report needed from any institution, facility, school or agency)	Any person with knowledge of or reasonable cause to believe a child is being neglected or abused	Immediate oral, followed as soon as possible by written	Appropriate police department or local welfare agency	Failure to report as required: misdemeanor Falsifying reports: liable in a civil suit for damages, both proximate and punitive	Civil and criminal immunity when reporting in good faith and exercising due care
Mississippi	Doctor (licensed); dentist; intern; resident; registered nurse; psychologist; teacher; social worker; school principal; child care giver; minister; law enforcement officer (director of agency, institution or hospital shall make report instead of staff)	None	Immediate oral, followed as soon as possible by written report	County welfare department	None	Presumption of good faith in favor of the reporter results in civil and criminal immunity

STATES	WHO MUST/MAY MAKE REPORTS: PERSONS MANDATED TO REPORT (COMPULSORY) WHEN REASONABLE CAUSE TO BELIEVE A CHILD IS OR HAS BEEN SUBJECTED TO ABUSE OR NEGLECT	PERMISSIVE	FORM OF REPORT & WHEN MADE	TO WHOM REPORT IS MADE	PENALTIES FOR	IMMUNITIES FOR
Missouri	Physician; medical examiner; coroner; dentist; chiropractor; optometrist; podiatrist; resident; intern; nurse; hospital and clinic personnel (engaged in examination, care or treatment); other health practitioner, psychologist; mental health professional; social worker; day care center worker or other child care worker; juvenile officer; probation or parole officer; teacher, principal or other school official; minister; Christian Science practitioner; peace officer or law enforcement official; or other person with responsibility for the care of children (director may make a report for staff)	Any other person with reasonable cause to believe that a child is or may be subjected to abuse or neglect	Oral, followed within 48 hours by written	Missouri Division of Family Services; if child has died, report goes to appropriate medical examiner or coroner	Misdemeanor: $1,000 and/or one year in county jail	Civil and criminal immunity for good faith report
Montana	Physician who examines, attends or treats a person under the age of majority; any nurse, teacher, social worker, attorney or law enforcement officer or any other person who has reason to believe that a child has had a serious injury as a result of abuse or neglect	None	No procedure specified; "promptly"	Department of social and rehabilitation services, its local affiliate and the county attorney of the county wherein the child resides	None	Presumption of good faith reporting: civil and criminal immunity, unless demonstration of bad faith or malicious purpose
Nebraska	Physician; medical institution; nurse; school employee; social worker; or any other person with reasonable cause to believe that a child or incompetent or disabled person is being abused or neglected	None	Oral, followed by written report; no time requirement	Proper law enforcement agency	None	None
Nevada	Physicians; surgeons; dentists; osteopaths; chiropractors; optometrists; residents and interns: superintendent or director of any hospital when physician in staff notifies; licensed nurse; attorney; clergyman; social worker; and every person who maintains or is employed by a licensed child care facility or children's camp	None	Oral, followed by written report as soon as possible	Local office of the welfare division of the department of human resources or any county agency authorized by the juvenile court to receive such reports; to any police department or sheriff's office	Misdemeanor for willful violation	Civil and criminal immunity for good faith report

New Hampshire	Any person having reason to suspect that a child. . .has been neglected or abused; physician on staff at hospital or similar institution shall notify director who shall make report	None	Immediate oral, followed as soon as possible by written	Bureau of child and family services of the division of welfare of the department of health and welfare	Knowing violation is misdemeanor	Civil and criminal immunity for good faith report
New Jersey	Any person having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse	None	Promptly, by telephone or otherwise	Bureau of children's services	Knowing failure to report when having reasonable cause renders offender a disorderly person, punishable for that offense	Civil and criminal immunity when acting pursuant to the act
New Mexico	Any licensed physician, resident or intern examining, attending or treating a child; any law enforcement officer; registered or visiting nurse; school teacher or social worker acting in her official capacity; or any other person having reason to believe that serious injury has been inflicted upon a child as a result of abuse, neglect or starvation	None	Immediately; no form specified	County social services office of the health and social services department in the county where the child lives, or the probation services office of that judicial district	Misdemeanor for failing to report, fine not less than $25 and not more than $100	Presumption of good faith provides civil and criminal immunity unless rebutted by a showing of bad faith or malicious purpose
New York	Physician; surgeon; medical examiner; coroner; dentist; osteopath; optometrist; chiropractor; podiatrist; resident; intern; registered nurse; hospital personnel engaged in the admission, examination, care or treatment of persons; Christian Science practitioner; school official; social services worker; day care center or other child care or foster care worker; mental health professional; peace officer or law enforcement official (both staff and director in agencies may report)	Any person having reasonable cause to suspect that the child is an abused or maltreated child	Immediate oral written within 48 hours	To statewide registry, unless appropriate local plan calls for report to local child protective service; written reports shall always be made to the local service; if the child has died, report must be made to the appropriate medical examiner or coroner	Criminal: Class A misdemeanor for willing failure to report civil: civil liability for all proximate damages caused by knowing and willing failure to report	Presumption of good faith in making report; civil and criminal immunity for reporters
North Carolina	Any professional person who has reasonable cause to suspect that any child is an abused child	None	Oral, telephone or written; no time limit	Director of social services of the county where the child lives or is found	None	Any person making a report or otherwise participating in the program set up by the act is given civil and criminal immunity in the absence of a showing of malice or lack of reasonable cause

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North Dakota	Physician; nurse; dentist; optometrist; medical examiner or coroner; any other medical or mental health professional; school teacher or administrator; school counselor; social worker; day care center or any other child care worker; police or law enforcement officer in his/her professional capacity	Any person having reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused or neglected	Oral immediately; written within 48 hours if requested	Division of community services of the social service board of North Dakota	Failure to report is a Class B misdemeanor for persons required to report	Anyone who reports except alleged violator, is presumed to do so in good faith and is granted civil and criminal immunity
Ohio	Any attorney; physician; intern; resident; dentist; podiatrist; surgeon; registered or licensed practical nurse; other licensed health-care professional; licensed psychologist; speech pathologist or audiologist; coroner, administrator or employee of a certified child care agency or other public or private childrens services agency; school teacher or authority; social worker or spiritual healer acting in his/her official capacity (director shall make report for staff of hospital)	Anyone having reason to believe that a child has been abused	Telephone immediately, followed by written report if requested	The children services board or the county department of welfare exercising the children's services functions or to a municipal or county peace officer in the county where the abuse has taken place	None	Civil and criminal immunity for those participating in reporting or judicial proceedings under the act
Oklahoma	Every physician or surgeon; dentists; licensed osteopaths; residents and interns examining attending, or treating a child under 18 years and every registered nurse performing the same function in the absence of a physician; every other person having reason to believe that the child has been abused or neglected	None	Oral report optional; written required; no time limit	County office of the department of institutions, social and rehabilitative services in the county where the abuse occurred	Misdemeanor to knowingly and willfully fail to promptly report	None
Oregon	Any physician; intern or resident; dentist, school employee; licensed or registered nurse; employee of the department of human resources; county and community mental and social health agencies; peace officer; psychologist; clergyman; social worker; optometrist; chiropractor; certified provider or employee of day care center; attorney who in his/her official capacity as a public official has reasonable cause to suspect abuse	None	Immediate oral	Local office of the children's services division or to a law enforcement agency within the subject county	Misdemeanor punishable by fine of $250	Civil and criminal immunity for good faith reports upon reasonable grounds

Pennsylvania	Includes, but is not limited to, licensed physician; medical examiner; coroner; dentist; osteopath; optometrist; chiropractor; podiatrist; intern; registered or licensed practical nurse; hospital personnel engaged in admission, examination, care or treatment of patients; Christian Science practitioner; school employee (including school nurse); social services or day care worker or any other child care or foster care worker; mental health professional; peace officer or law enforcement official (directors of hospitals and similar institutions shall report in lieu of staff who shall report ot the director)	Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that the child is abused	Immediate oral; written within 48 hours	Appropriate child protective service; if child dies, report of that fact must be made to the coroner	Willful failure: summary offense; second or subsequent offense is a third-degree misdemeanor	Civil and criminal immunity for good faith report
Rhode Island	Any person (especially physicians) who have reasonable cause to believe that a child has been battered and/or abused	Same; any person with reasonable cause	Physician: immediate oral followed by a written	Physicians: department of social and rehabilitative services, division of community services; also, to law enforcement agency	None	Civil and criminal immunity for reporters and those involved in judicial proceedings under the act for good faith report
			Others: within 24 hours, no form given	Others: director of social and rehabilitative services		
South Carolina	All practitioners of the healing arts and any other person having reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of 17 years has been subjected to physical abuse or neglect	None	Immediate oral	County department of social services or to the county sheriff's office or chief county law enforcement officer in the county where the child is found	Violation of the provisions of the act results in misdemeanor and, upon conviction, punishable by up to $500 and/or six months	Good faith reporter or participant in judicial proceedings merits civil and criminal immunity
South Dakota	Any physician, surgeon, dentist, osteopath, chiropractor, optometrist, podiatrist, psychologist, social worker, hospital intern or resident, law enforcement officer, teacher, school counselor, offical or nurse, coroner, (hospital staff report to director who shall in turn make the required official report)	Any person who suspects or has reason to believe that a child has received physical or emotional injury as a result of abuse or neglect	Immediate oral	State's attorney of the county in which the child lives or is present, or the department of social services	Knowing and willful failure to make required report is a misdemeanor	Immunity from civil and criminal liability if report is made in good faith

STATES	WHO MUST/MAY MAKE REPORTS: PERSONS MANDATED TO REPORT (COMPULSORY) WHEN REASONABLE CAUSE TO BELIEVE A CHILD IS OR HAS BEEN SUBJECTED TO ABUSE OR NEGLECT	PERMISSIVE	FORM OF REPORT & WHEN MADE	TO WHOM REPORT IS MADE	PENALTIES FOR	IMMUNITIES FOR
Tennessee	Any person having knowledge of or called upon to render aid to any child who is suffering from or has sustained any mental or physical injury that is such as may be reasonably the result of brutality, abuse or neglect (director of hospital reports for staff)	None	Oral or otherwise	Judge having juvenile jurisdiction or to the county office of the department of human services; or to the office of the sheriff or chief law officer in the county	Knowing failure to report is a misdemeanor punishable by not more than fine of $50.00 and/or three months imprisonment; judge may bind respondent over to grand jury if he pleads innocent	Presumption of good faith; civil and criminal immunity
Texas	Any person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or will be adversely affected by abuse or neglect	None	Oral immediately; written within five days anonymous reports, while not encouraged, are accepted and acted upon	County welfare unit, the county agency responsible for the protection of juveniles or any local or state law enforcement agency	None	Any person reporting under this act is immune from civil and criminal liability; immunity extends to participation in judicial proceedings; persons reporting in bad faith or with malice are not protected
Utah	Any person who knows or reasonably suspects that a child's health or welfare has been, or appears to have been, harmed as a result of abuse or neglect (director of hospital or similar institution makes reports for staff)	None	Oral report as soon as possible; may follow with written (permissive)	Local city police or county sheriff or office of the division of family services	Knowing or willful violation is a misdemeanor	Good faith report engenders civil and criminal immunity, extends to judicial proceedings
Vermont	Any physician; surgeon; osteopath; chiropractor; physician's assistant; any resident or intern in any hospital in the state; registered or licensed practical nurse; medical examiner; dentist; or police officer with reasonable cause to believe that any child has been abused or neglected	Psychologist, school teacher, day care center worker, school principal or guidance counselor, mental health professional, social worker, probation officer or clergyman who has reasonable cause to believe that a child is being abused or neglected	Oral report, followed in one week by written	Commissioner of social and rehabilitative services or his designee	Knowing and willful violation of duty to report subject to fine of not more than $100	All reporters (mandatory and permissive) who do so in good faith receive civil and criminal immunity, extending to judicial proceedings

Virginia	Physician, resident, intern, nurse, social worker, probation officer, school employee, full- or part-time child care, Christian Science practitioner, mental health professional, law enforcement official in his official capacity	Any person	Immediate oral	Local branch of the state department of welfare; if an employee of the department is suspected of being the abuser, the report shall be filed with juvenile and domestic relations district court for that county	Fine of not more than $500 for first failure to report; subsequent failures to be fined between $100 and $1,000	Immunity from civil and criminal liability provided in absence of malicious intent
Washington	Any practitioner of the healing arts (broadly defined); professional school personnel; registered or licensed nurse; social worker; psychologist; pharmacist; or employee of the department of social and health services who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect	Any other person who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect	Immediate oral followed by written if requested	Local law enforcement agency; department of social and health services	Failure to report as required is punishable as a misdemeanor	Reporting or testifying results in immunity from prosecution arising out of that reporting or testifying under any law of the state
West Virginia	Physician or surgeon, intern, doctor of the healing arts examining, attending or treating a child under the age of 18 years; any registered or visiting nurse, school teacher, social worker acting in her official capacity as such having reason to believe that the child has injuries as a result of abuse or neglect (director of hospital or similar institution shall report for staff)	None	Must be reduced to writing as soon as practicable	Nearest office of the department of welfare and to the prosecuting attorney of the county in which the injury occurred, or, if unknown, the county in which the child was found	None	Acting in good faith results in civil and criminal immunity, extending to judicial proceedings
Wisconsin	Physician, surgeon, nurse, hospital administrator, dentist, social worker or school administrator having reasonable cause to believe that a child has a physical injury or other abuse inflicted on him/her by non-accidental means	None	Immediately by telephone or otherwise, followed by the written report within 48 hours	A county child welfare agency specified in section 48.56(1) or the sheriff of the county or the local police department	Anyone knowingly and willfully violating this section by failing to file a report as required may be fined not more than $100 and/or imprisoned for not more than six months	Acting in good faith in reporting or participating in judicial proceedings results in civil and criminal immunity that might be imposed otherwise
Wyoming	Any physician; surgeon; dentist; osteopath; chiropractor; podiatrist; intern; resident; nurse; druggist; pharmicist; laboratory technician; school teacher or administrator; social worker; or any other person having reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of 18 years is or has been the subject of child abuse (director of hospital or similar institution shall make report for staff)	None	Oral immediately, followed by written if requested	Department of health and social services, division of public assistance and social services, in the county where the examination was conducted or the child was observed	None	Persons reporting or participating in judicial proceedings in good faith are immune from civil or criminal liability that might otherwise arise

CENTRAL REGISTRIES

The functions of central registries are (1) to gather accurate incidence data about the various forms of abuse and neglect, (2) to provide a way to identify repeated abuse and neglect situations and (3) to maintain a body of data from which sorely needed research might formally begin, such as studying what happens to children who were subjected to early abuse and neglect in their own adult-abusing patterns or later physical, emotional, social or learning disorders.

Critical to the ethical maintenance of a central registry system is the issue of confidentiality — who has access to the records, who decides how and when they might be used and who is to do the necessary research to answer questions relating to child abuse and its prevention and treatment (ECS Report No. 71, pp. 45-56). The purpose of following comparative digest is to provide the reader with an overview of current legislative trends regarding central registries.

STATES	PRESENT IN THE STATUTE?	WHAT PARTIES HAVE ACCESS TO REPORTS	PENALTIES FOR IMPROPER USE OR RELEASE
Alabama	Yes	Appropriate government agencies concerned with child protection for judicial proceedings; police; physicians; guardian ad litem for child; and persons engaged in bona fide research	Violation of restrictions punishable as misdemeanor
Alaska	Yes	Appropriate child protection (government) agencies (inside and outside the state) in connection with investigations or judicial proceedings involving child abuse, neglect, or custody	None
Arizona	Yes	Social agencies (juvenile court, physicians, and health and educational agencies and institutions) with approval of director of economic security	Persons making report *or* releasing information immune from civil and criminal liability *unless* they acted with malice and without probable cause
Arkansas	Yes	Physician, reporting agency; any person who is the subject of a report; court	Willful release to improper party is a Class A misdemeanor
California	Yes	Those persons specifically mandated to make reports under the statute	None
Colorado	Yes	Law enforcement agency or department investigating a report; physician who has before him a child he reasonably believes may have been abused; agency having legal responsibility or authorization to care for, treat or supervise a child who is the subject of a report; a parent, guardian, legal custodian or other person who is responsible for the child's health and welfare; any person named in the report or record who was alleged as a child to be abused or neglected; the child's guardian ad litem, a parent, guardian, legal custodian or other person responsible for the health or welfare of a child named in a report; court	Class one misdemeanor
Connecticut	Yes	Physician; surgeon; resident; intern; registered or licensed practical nurse; medical examiner; dentist; psychologist; teacher; school principal; school guidance counselor; social worker; police officer; clergyman	Up to $1000 or imprisonment up to one year
Delaware	Yes	Files confidential subject to rules and regulations of the division	None

District of Columbia	Not statutorily; however, the youth division of the metropolitan police department does maintain a registry	Police department only	None
Florida	Yes	Those appropriate (e.g., in connection with treatment of an abused child, for bona fide research purposes, in the treatment of the person accused of the abuse and the counsel representing such person in court)	Knowing and willful violation of section results in second-degree misdemeanor
Georgia	Not statutorily, but the department of human resources maintains an administrative registry	Legally mandated public or private child protective agencies investigating a report or treating a child or his/her family; courts; grand juries; district attorney; physicians attending the child; police; persons other than the parent or guardian having legal responsibility, person authorized to place the child in protective custody	None; however, reports are declared confidential
Hawaii	Yes	Staff of department of social services and housing and social agencies (undefined) working with the child or the family who has been registered	None
Idaho	None statutorily created, but the department of environmental and community services maintains a registry	Department of environment and community services staff only	None
Illinois	Yes	Authorized staff of the department of children and family services and others approved by the department	Class A misdemeanor to permit or encourage unauthorized dissemination
Indiana	No statutorily created registry, but one is maintained by the department of public welfare	County department of welfare and field consultants	None
Iowa	Yes	Health practitioner examining, treating or attending a child believed to have been abused; social worker doing the investigation; juvenile court or district court for child abuse issue (excluding criminal prosecutions); authorized person or agency caring for or supervising an abused child; bona fide researcher; registry and department personnel when necessary	Criminal: willful misuse or inducement to misuse or report, up to two years imprisonment and/or up to $1000; knowing but noncriminal use punishable up to $100 or 10 days in county jail
Kansas	Yes	Courts; person licensed to practice the healing arts who has before him a child suspected of being abused; parents or guardians; agencies with responsibility for the child; police	Class B misdemeanor for willfully or knowingly permitting or encouraging unauthorized disclosure

STATES	PRESENT IN THE STATUTE?	WHAT PARTIES HAVE ACCESS TO REPORTS	PENALTIES FOR IMPROPER USE OR RELEASE
Kentucky	No statutory registry; however, a registry is maintained in the department of human resources	Staff of the department, staff of metropolitan social services department in Louisville	None
Louisiana	Yes	Local child service agencies; hospitals; clinics; schools; and other states, upon regulation by the department of public welfare	None
Maine	No statutory provision for registry, but provision for access to records, which are kept by department of health and welfare	Any legally mandated public or private agency investigating a report or treating a subject child or family; police investigating a report; physician treating child suspected of being abused; person or agency having legal responsibility to care for or place child who is a subject of a report; parent; guardian; guardian ad litem; a court; grand jury; state or local official responsible for the child protection service or legislation; person engaged in bona fide research	Misdemeanor: fine up to $1000 and/or up to six months imprisonment
Maryland	Yes	Local departments of social services; social agencies; law enforcement agencies; physicians; health and educational facilities	None
Massachusetts	Yes	Made available only upon the approval of the commissioner or upon court order	$1,000 and / or two and a half years for disclosure (unlawful) by employee of the registry
Michigan	Yes	Reporting agencies; protective service agencies; police; physician treating child suspected of being abused; any person named in a report; any person authorized to place child in protective custody; courts; grand juries, bona fide researchers	Person who permits or encourages unauthorized dissemination of reports is guilty of a misdemeanor
Minnesota	No statutory central registry; however, all reports are kept by the local welfare agencies	Subject of the report, county departments of public welfare	None
Mississippi	None	Not available	Not available
Missouri	Yes	Physicians; appropriate staff of the division and its local offices; any person who is the subject of a report or the guardian of such person; grand jury; juvenile officer; juvenile court where conducting abuse and/or neglect proceedings; bona fide researcher	Misdemeanor: up to $1,000 and/or one year in county jail

Montana	Yes	Confidential unless court orders release	None
Nebraska	Yes	County attorney; juvenile court or county or state director of public welfare in Nebraska or other states, to be used only for the protection of any child or incompetent or disabled person; statistical information may be released so long as names are not made available	None
Nevada	Yes	Physician; person authorized to place child in protective custody; agency responsible or authorized to perform the care, treatment or supervision of the child; his parents, guardian or person responsible for his welfare; district attorney or other law officer in connection with an investigation; bona fide researcher; guardian ad litem for child; grand jury; any comparable agency or person in another jurisdiction; person named in report as being abused or neglected	Misdemeanor
New Hampshire	Yes	Subject to rules and regulations for access as established by the division of welfare; any professional or medical person or hospital, upon written request	Misdemeanor
New Jersey	Yes	Not provided	Knowing violation of the act constitutes disorderly person
New Mexico	None	Not available	Not available
New York	Yes	Physician; person authorized to place child in temporary protective custody; agency having responsibility for the care of such child; the subject of a report; court and grand jury when necessary; any legislative committee for bona fide research purposes; district attorney	Willfully permitting unauthorized release is a Class A misdemeanor
North Carolina	Yes	Anyone, for bona fide research purposes, upon written request giving purpose and assurances of confidentiality	None
North Dakota	No specifically created central registry, but reports are held and access granted on much the same basis as in central registry	Physician; person authorized to place a child in temporary protective custody; authorized staff of the division and appropriate county social service board; any person who is the subject of the report; public officials; court; bona fide researcher	Class B misdemeanor
Ohio	Yes	Public welfare agencies, by written request; statistical data to all others	Fourth-degree misdemeanor for unauthorized release

STATES	PRESENT IN THE STATUTE?	WHAT PARTIES HAVE ACCESS TO REPORTS	PENALTIES FOR IMPROPER USE OR RELEASE
Oklahoma	Yes	Any county office of the department of institutions, social and rehabilitative services; any district attorney's office; any public law enforcement agency investigating a report of suspected abuse or neglect	Misdemeanor for unauthorized dissemination
Oregon	Yes	Physician; law enforcement agencies inside and outside Oregon; and information available to other state central registries	Violation of confidentiality regulations is punishable by a fine not exceeding $1,000
Pennsylvania	Yes	Child protective service that requests the information on behalf of a physician or the director of the institution where the child is being treated; child's guardian ad litem; authorized official of the department; court pursuant to court order	Third-degree misdemeanor
Rhode Island	Yes	None specified	None
South Carolina	Yes	None specified	None
South Dakota	Yes	Attorney general; state's attorneys; judges of the court and any other person by order of the court; other regional or national registries; courts of record in other states	Knowing violation of confidentiality is a misdemeanor
Tennessee	Yes	State statute delegates adoption of rules for disclosure for purposes of research and cooperation with local child service agencies including, but not limited to, hospitals, clinics, schools and physicians in attempts to identify cases of suspected abuse; not open to public inspection	None
Texas	Yes	Welfare departments to develop rules and regulations for cooperation with local child service agencies, hospitals, clinics, physicians and schools; for cooperation with other states to establish a national registration system	None
Utah	None	Not available	Not available
Vermont	Yes	Commissioner of the department or person by him to receive such reports; persons assigned by the commissioner to investigate reports; the person reported on; a prosecuting attorney; or other persons expressly designated by order of the human services board who have need of the report	Fine of not more than $50 for violation of these regulations

Virginia	Yes	Any state or local governmental agency; not open to public inspection	None
Washington	Yes	Law enforcement agencies; child protective service agencies; any physician treating a child suspected of being abused, or treating his or her family; any child named in the report; any child's guardian; parent; attorney; any person whose name appears on the registry; any person engaged in bona fide research	Wrongful dissemination constitutes a misdemeanor
West Virginia	No statutory provision for central registry, but one is maintained in the attorney general's office	Prosecuting attorneys, state office of the department of welfare	Not specified
Wisconsin	No statutory provision, but a registry is maintained by the department of health and social services (also, Assembly Bill #455, 1975 session, has proposed statutory creation of such a registry)	County welfare agency, licensed voluntary agencies, public agencies in other states	Not specified
Wyoming	Yes	None specified — department makes its own rules and regulations concerning access to information	Misdemeanor for unlawful dissemination

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